

*Bill includes Wilson amendment to boost rural STEM education*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Rep. Charlie Wilson (OH-6) voted in support of critical legislation that will spur innovation in this country. The America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010 passed the House by a vote of 262 to 150. The bill, which makes investments in science, innovation, and education, includes an amendment offered by Wilson. Wilson's amendment directs the National Science Foundation (NSF) and Department of Education to consider the specific Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) challenges faced by students in rural schools.

"Too many of our rural students are struggling to receive an adequate STEM education," Wilson said. "Sadly, many of our rural schools lack the resources needed to provide the STEM education necessary for students entering the 21st Century workforce."

In addition to Wilson's amendment, the bill will improve STEM education by reauthorizing the Noyce scholarships, which help give K-12 educators a stronger foundation in their teaching fields. The bill also addresses coordination of STEM activities across the federal government, and improves STEM education at the undergraduate, graduate, and post-doctoral levels.

Wilson serves on the House Committee on Science and Technology, which drafted the bill. The overall bill is designed to support employers today, while strengthening the U.S. scientific and economic leadership as they grow the new industries of tomorrow.

"If we are to reverse the trend of the last twenty years, where our country's technology edge in the world has diminished, we must make the investments necessary today," said House Committee on Science and Technology Chairman Bart Gordon (D-TN). "The path is simple. Research and education lead to innovation. Innovation leads to economic development and good paying jobs and the revenue to pay for more research."

The bill invests in basic research programs by authorizing increased funding levels over the next ten years at several organizations, including: the Department of Energy's Office of Science, the single largest U.S. supporter of research in the physical sciences; the National Science

Foundation, which supports fundamental research and education in all the non-medical fields of science and engineering; and the National Institute of Standards and Technology, which conducts research to advance the nation's technology infrastructure and support industry.

Finally, the bill supports local efforts to form Regional Innovation Clusters, which will strengthen regional economies and advance the work done in a given field by leveraging collaboration and communication between businesses and other entities. It also addresses immediate needs by creating Innovative Technology Federal Loan Guarantees to help small- and medium-sized manufacturers access capital to make necessary updates to become more efficient and stay competitive.

Over 750 organizations have endorsed the legislation including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and the National Association of Manufacturers.

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